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ABSTRACT

Beliefs and judgment "policies" of student teachers, cooperating teachers, and college supervisors are examined. Results from a belief questionnaire and judgment task converged to indicate: (a) a large degree of shared belief and similarity in judgments of "good teaching" are present before student teaching begins, (b) institutional differences between cooperating teachers and college supervisors center around practical-academic views of educational authority, and (c) student teachers are oriented early toward a confrontation between idealized educational views and practical role demands. Findings suggest new programs in teacher education would benefit from scrutiny of the social and institutional framework within which student teaching occurs. (Author/JD)

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Belief And Judgment "Policies" In Student Teaching: Institutional Differences And The Distribution Of Knowledge*

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Belief and Judgment Orientations in Student Teaching: Institutional Differences And The Preparation of Student Teachers

Many popular critiques of schooling have centered upon the influence of cultural and institutional values on educational practice (Friedenberg, 1965; Henry, 1963; Illich, 1971). The classical works of Bagley (1910) on classroom management, and Waller (1932) on the sociology of teaching emphasize the importance and necessity of authority, control, and progress for the teacher and the school. Little attention has been given to the different meanings such values take on in different systems of schooling.

The present study attempted to examine the types of belief and judgmental orientations characteristic of those working in different educational settings. The focus for the present investigation was on a central schooling enterprise; that of student teaching.

While there has been an enormous amount of research on student teaching, much remains to be known regarding the possible functions and problems of this facet of teacher education. From the present perspective, student teaching was felt to be an important context where institutional differences in belief and judgment are likely to be most salient and influential. Further, the position of the student teacher as both object and agent of such schooling, suggests one may

find a basic ambiguity in the beliefs and judgments of student teachers already present prior to active student teaching.

Studies examining changes in attitude throughout student teaching (e.g. Yee, 1968), indicate that the very structure of the student teaching triad may facilitate conflict and coalitions the bases of which remain to be elucidated. The triad of interest here consists of the student teacher, the college supervisor, and the cooperating teacher in a local school system.

Iannaccone and Button (1964) examined the experiences of student teachers throughout student teaching and found that "successful" student teachers were able to integrate or suspend their rather idealized, academic views in adapting to the practical demands of classroom teaching and the views of the cooperating teacher. This suggests, contrary to the view proposed here, that the initial belief and judgmental orientation of the student teacher is largely rooted in an academic (college) interpretation of educational method and practice.

The present study attempted to clarify the above findings by a more specific examination of belief and judgment orientations present before active student teaching begins.

Method

Conceptualization and measurement of the variables was directly facilitated by discussions with student teachers, university educators, and teachers in local school systems.

Thus, an effort was made to "ground" the study in the everyday concerns and reflections of those most involved in programs of student teaching.

On the basis of interviews and discussions, a belief questionnaire and judgment task were designed. These two measures were intended to represent two different yet complementary aspects of value orientation in student teaching.

Belief Instrument

Four general areas of belief were examined: (a) orientations toward students (e.g. "Each student is different and must be treated as an individual."), (b) orientations toward teachers and self as teacher (e.g. "In the end a teacher's feeling of satisfaction depends on maintaining personal standards of behavior."), (c) orientations toward schooling and systems of education (e.g. "Every educational system should reflect and promote the values and norms of society."), and (d) orientations toward what is conveyed (e.g. "The learning of general principles is more important than any particular subject matter.").

A 46 item belief questionnaire was constructed around these four general areas. Responses to such statements as those above were made by indicating agreement or disagreement on a seven point scale (+3 to -3) running from strong through moderate and slight agreement and disagreement, with a neutral or 'no opinion' point in the center. The questionnaire was pretested with the help of 108 students in education

courses. Most of these students either had teaching experience or were preparing for it.

Judgment Task

A more practical measure of educational orientation, pertinent to student teaching, was felt to be desirable. In this regard, the assessment of "good teaching" was felt to be especially relevant. A judgment task was constructed whereby individual and group judgments of hypothetical teachers could be examined.

The approach to judgment used in the present study is based on conceptualization of judgment "policy." A judgment policy may be thought of as an organized system of relationships between a person's judgments and the types of information on which such judgments are based (See Rappoport and Summers, 1973, p. 4). A multiple regression equation is used to describe the manner in which individuals or groups weight and combine particular information in making judgments. Thus, what results is a set of beta weights indicating the relative weight given particular types of information in making judgments along some dimension; in the present study, "good teaching."

It is important to provide judges with information relevant for the type of judgment required. In the present instance, interviews had indicated that a teacher's rapport with students, ability to control the class, and knowledge of subject matter were seen as most important (ranked highest by

educators and student teachers). After examination of various teacher evaluation manuals, and rankings by educators, five teacher attributes were chosen as most relevant to judgments of teachers and "good teaching." These attributes were: (a) Responsiveness to Students, (b) Knowledge of Subject Matter, (c) Class Management, (d) Seriousness about the Profession, and (e) Diverse Teaching Skills. These attributes then constituted dimensions of information about hypothetical teachers upon which judgments of "good teaching" were made.

The judgment task consisted of a booklet containing the profiles of ten hypothetical teachers represented by their different standing (bar graphs) on the five dimensions of teaching. Subjects were asked to examine each profile and judge on a 20 point scale the degree of "good teaching" represented by a teacher's profile. Multiple regression analyses of the judgments resulted in a set of beta weights providing a standardized estimate of the weight given each of the five types of information in making judgments of the teachers. The five beta weights were considered to represent a subject's judgment policy with regard to the assessment of teachers and teaching. The judgment task was not designed to be an exhaustive measure of teacher judgment or decision making, but rather was intended to complement examination of belief and hopefully elucidate a more practical aspect of educational orientation.

Subjects

Student Teachers. Those preparing for student teaching

were contacted through the auspices of the Multi-Institutional Teacher Education Center (MITEC) in Topeka, Kansas. At this time, 53 student teachers in the fall (1974) and 57 in the spring (1975) were asked to participate. Most of the student teachers had met briefly with their cooperating teachers, but had not yet begun their student teaching.

The student teachers ranged in age from 20 to 34 years. There were 88 females and 22 males, with most (82 vs. 28) working in secondary curriculums.

Cooperating Teachers. During the fall (1974), 52 working teachers had been contacted through the offices of MITEC and completed the judgment task only. In the spring (1975), 20 cooperating teachers from Manhattan, Kansas were contacted and responses obtained to both the belief questionnaire and judgment task. The total sample of cooperating teachers ranged in age from 21 to 62 years with a minimum of two years teaching experience. The majority of the total 72 teachers were working in secondary school curriculums (52 vs. 20).

College Supervisors. This group consisted of eight faculty and three doctoral students at Kansas State University with experience in the supervision of student teachers. The supervisors ranged in age from 28 to 46 years.

Analyses

One hundred nine student teachers, 20 cooperating teachers, and 11 college supervisors completed the belief instrument. Specific item responses served as dependent measures in multivariate analyses.

A total of 107 student teachers, 71 cooperating teachers, and 11 college supervisors completed the judgment task. Multiple regression analysis was used to describe the relationships exhibited between the five types of information and the judgments. The beta weights of the regression equation were used as dependent measures in multivariate analyses examining judgment policy differences.

Results

A multivariate analysis of variance performed on the responses to the 46 belief items indicated general agreement on most issues with only eight items significantly differentiating the three groups. Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and univariate Fs for the eight items.

Insert Table 1 about here

Examination of the items significantly differentiating the three groups does indicate that differences between college supervisors and cooperating teachers fall along institutional and professional lines. Such differences, indirectly, shed light as well on the position of the student teacher.

Specifically, student teachers and cooperating teachers are more practically oriented in their views of authority than the college supervisor (items 3, 4, and 44). The college supervisors are more oriented towards general, abstract

issues about teaching and education (items 2 and 23). The student teachers, perhaps, anticipating the demands of the classroom, agree that "Right from the start, students need to know teacher is boss." The academic based college supervisors indicated least agreement with such a statement.

The college supervisors then seem more oriented toward broader concerns. These supervisors indicated, on the average, greater agreement with the statement that "The worth of any educational system should be tested by the character and quality of the students it turns out." While the student teachers are somewhat more practically oriented than the college supervisors, they retain agreement on general issues. Thus, student teachers and college supervisors were similar in indicating less agreement with the statement concerning the importance of "practice and drill" for self discipline (item 3), and differ from the cooperating teachers in placing greater emphasis on the learning of general principles (item 23).

Judgment Analysis

Table 2 presents the average judgment policies for the three groups. To assess overall differences in the judgment policies of the three groups, a multivariate analysis of variance was performed with the five beta weights and squared multiple correlation (R^2) comprising the dependent variables. Table 2 presents the mean beta weights, standard deviations, and univariate Fs for the beta weights and R^2s. The overall

multivariate F indicated significant mean policy differences in the judgments of the three groups, $F(12, 362) = 2.79$, $p < .001$.

Insert Table 2 about here

The findings here converge with those found in examining belief items. Thus, the three groups generally agree as to the relative importance given the five types of information. Differences seem to center around practical vs. academic distinctions. Being "responsive" was given most weight, with a teacher's ability to maintain order and discipline emphasized least by college supervisors and student teachers. The two experienced groups of teachers, as would be expected, placed more weight on a teacher's professional orientation than the student teachers, $F(2, 186) = 3.63$, $p < .028$.

The student teachers are similar to the cooperating teachers in giving less weight to a teacher's "knowledge of subject matter," yet are in agreement with the college supervisors in strongly emphasizing "responsiveness" and placing relatively less weight on "class management." Perhaps, the position of the student teacher is revealed best by the importance attached to a teacher's "teaching skills." College supervisors placed significantly greater weight on this type of information than the cooperating teachers, $F(2, 186), = 2.99$, $p < .05$. The student teachers also weighted this information more than the cooperating teachers, $t(1, 175), = 4.45$,

$p < .01$, while also placing significantly less emphasis on it than the college supervisors, $t = 4.18$, $p < .01$. Thus, as hypothesized, the position of the student teachers seems oriented "in between" the judgmental views of the two experienced groups of teachers before student teaching.

The college supervisors differ from their counterparts in the local school system in the weight given to a teacher's "knowledge of subject matter" (Ms = .524 vs. .404, ns.), "diverse teaching skills" (Ms = .342 vs. .152, $p < .05$), and de-emphasis given "class management" (Ms = .187 vs. .255, ns.). These findings generally conform to those found in examination of belief differences, and suggest a practical-academic dimension underlying the institutional orientations of college supervisors and cooperating teachers.

Summary and Conclusions

In general, a large amount of agreement was indicated concerning the educational issues and the manner of assessing "good teaching." While not surprising, it is important to remember that the student teacher, after years of schooling, already shares major educational values with the experienced groups of teachers. Thus, the student teachers are not oriented simply toward the acquisition of new educational belief and value. At the same time however, the findings indicate that the student teachers cannot be characterized as inexperienced, idealistic academics. Rather, the very position or role of the student teacher seems oriented toward a confrontation or precarious balance between idealized academic know-

ledge on the one hand, and the practical-authority demands of the classroom on the other. Thus, the differences found in the present study suggest the position of student teacher is facilitative of an integration of abstract educational views with the more practical demands of classroom teaching. The institutional differences between college supervisors and cooperating teachers possibly contribute to such an orientation.

Findings from both measures converged to indicate the student teachers were "in between" the practical-academic poles separating college supervisors and cooperating teachers. Thus, while the student teachers were oriented toward practical problems such as the establishment of immediate authority (item 4), and the value of practice and drill (item 3), they still felt that the learning of general principles was important (item 23).

Likewise, in the judgment task, student teachers were similar to the college supervisors in emphasizing a teacher's "responsiveness" and de-emphasizing "class management." At the same time, the student teachers gave less weight to "knowledge of subject matter" and "diverse teaching skills" than the college supervisors.

It is interesting to note here the discrepancy between belief and judgment for these student teachers. While strongly believing in the value of establishing immediate authority in the class, the student teachers, in their actual judgments,

gave least weight to a teacher's ability to maintain order and discipline (class management). As others have pointed out (e.g. Shumsky and Murray, 1961), the clash between belief in discipline and its actual implementation is a central and recurring problem in student teaching.

Previous research examining the experiences of student teachers throughout their student teaching has indicated that "successful" student teachers accommodate to the views of the cooperating teacher as well as integrate abstract educational value with the demands of classroom progress and expediency (see Iannaccone and Button, 1964). The present findings suggest the social position of student teacher, before active student teaching, is already oriented toward the confrontation between generalized academic views and anticipated practical demands. Examination of interview material (Peterson, Note 1), has indicated student teachers are often especially concerned over conflict between school and university authority. These findings, as those of the present study, point to the institutional make-up of student teaching systems as being critical.

Yee (1968) examined attitudinal congruences and differences throughout student teaching and found evidence suggesting the framework and organization of the student teaching triad was conducive to conflict and exacerbation of attitude differences. The results of the present study support these findings while offering a more specific look at the types of

belief and judgmental orientations initially present in the student teaching system. Yee (1968) also found disagreement between college supervisors and cooperating teachers concerning their final judgments of student teacher performance. The present findings suggest the type of practical-academic distinctions that may underlie such differences in judgment.

Differences in belief between the two experienced groups of teachers seemed also to reflect the differing institutions they represent. College supervisors expressed more concern about the learning of general principles and the importance of vocational success (items 23 and 24), and cooperating teachers emphasized more the role of discipline, practice and drill, and teacher authority (items 3 and 44).

Findings from the judgment task converge and support those found in examining belief differences. Thus, the college supervisors, in contrast to the cooperating teachers, placed relatively greater weight on a teacher's "responsiveness" and "diverse teaching skills," and attached less importance to "class management" (see Table 2).

The position of the student teacher is seen more clearly in light of these differences. The cooperating teacher is oriented to the practical demands of discipline and class progress in a particular school system. The college supervisor, even if having had previous experience in a local school system, is now an academician serving a different system of schooling. Responsiveness, subject matter, and

teaching skills are more "practical" and germane to the work of the college supervisor. The student teacher shares general concern with these issues, yet is in a position where they may have to be suspended or implemented according to the demands found in the cooperating teacher's classroom. Previous research by Sorenson (1967) indicated that student teachers feel they must conform to the demands of "an existing system, or at least to the demands of a person who represents that system" (p. 177). The present findings, from both examination of belief and judgment policy, suggest the student teacher role is socially structured around the demands of two systems, and the ideas and practices of two people representing these different systems. Aside from emphasis on a more compatible team approach in student teaching as suggested by Yee (1968), more systematic exploration of the origin and nature of the institutional framework of student teaching may be fruitful. Social psychological speculation would suggest that student teachers may not only be "learning the ropes," but also be serving as a vehicle or means by which the school system and university can maintain a relatively stable and united view of education.

The results of the present study, while supporting previous research, do not just confirm the obvious, but offer a more explicit view of the preparation of student teachers and the nature of institutional differences in student teaching. In addition to general description of belief and judg-

ment differences, the judgment analysis provides an account of the ways particular information is utilized and weighted in judgments of teaching.

In summary, the present findings tend to support the idea that the student teacher, before student teaching, is "in between" and likely in an ambiguous position with respect to the educational beliefs and judgmental orientations of college supervisors and cooperating teachers. Certainly, more systematic examination of how the demands and expectations of the student teaching role are shaped by the differing institutional bases of college supervisor and cooperating teacher may prove useful.

The present research lends credence as well to emphasis on team oriented programs, with a certain degree of autonomy, and a social framework where the student teacher is not faced with, or expecting to sift out the views of college supervisor and cooperating teacher.

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Table 1

Specific Belief Differences in The

Student Teaching Triad

Items	Student Teachers (n= 109)	Cooperating Teachers (n= 20)	College Supervisors (n= 11)	F ratio	p less than
2.	The worth of any educational system should be tested by the character and quality of the students it turns out.				
	M = 5.08	5.42	6.36		
	SD= 1.70	1.54	.67	3.23	.04
3.	Constant practice and drill is not only important for mastery of subject matter, but it also teaches self-discipline.				
	M = 3.41	4.26	2.27		
	SD= 1.72	1.63	1.68	4.83	.009
4.	Right from the start, students need to know that the teacher is boss.				
	M = 5.24	3.95	2.64		
	SD= 1.75	1.61	1.91	13.93	.001
23.	The learning of general principles is more important than any particular subject matter.				
	M = 5.04	4.21	5.64		
	SD= 1.37	1.84	1.43	3.91	.02

Table 1 Contd.

Items	Student Teachers	Cooperating Teachers	College Supervisors	*F* ratio	*p* less than
24.	In general, the value of the educational enterprise depends upon the vocational success of the student it produces.				
	M = 3.70	4.00	5.18		
	SD= 1.62	1.91	1.54	4.10	.02
33.	One way to improve many school systems is by budgeting more funds for new learning aids and teaching apparatus.				
	M = 5.47	4.68	4.73		
	SD= 1.30	1.45	1.01	4.12	.01
34.	The more freedom and independence teachers are allowed, the better it is for them and their students.				
	M = 5.73	5.26	4.73		
	SD= 1.22	1.45	1.10	3.91	.02
44.	Teachers must recognize and accept their role as authority figures in the classroom.				
	M = 5.40	5.10	3.73		
	SD= 1.45	1.29	1.95	6.45	.002

Note. Rating of items was based on a scale from 1 to 7; higher ratings indicate greater agreement.

Table 2

Analysis of Mean Policy Differences

Teacher Information	Student Teachers	Cooperating Teachers	College Supervisors	Univariate F
Responsiveness				
	M = .628	.510	.622	4.86**
	SD = .224	.301	.116	
Subject Matter				
	M = .408	.404	.524	1.48
	SD = .211	.243	.111	
Professional				
	M = .204	.305	.324	3.63*
	SD = .265	.259	.238	
Class Mgmnt.				
	M = .146	.255	.187	2.93*
	SD = .283	.321	.199	
Teaching Skills				
	M = .250	.151	.342	3.00*
	SD = .315	.320	.226	
R^2s				
	M = .825	.834	.874	.79
	SD = .131	.120	.080	

*p < .05.

**p < .001.